

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 9-18 are currently pending in the application. Claims 4, 9, 10, and 13 have been amended, claims 5-7 has been cancelled herein, and new claims 14-18 have been added.

I. FORMAL MATTERS

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 7 and 9-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. As presented below, Applicant submits the remaining claims are allowable.

Applicant notes with appreciation that the Office Action indicates that the replacement drawing filed on May 22, 2006 is acceptable.

Applicant notes with appreciation that the Office Action indicates that the terminal disclaimer filed on May 22, 2006 has been reviewed and accepted.

Applicant notes with appreciation the inclusion of the PTO form SB/08 that was included in the IDS filed March 8, 2006. Each reference listed therein is initialed by the Examiner thereby indicating that each reference was considered and will be listed on the face of any patent that issues from the present application.

II. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

Claims 1-6 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,687,022 to Lapstun et al. ("Lapstun") in view of Applicants Admitted Prior Art ("AAPA") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,665,088 to Chiba et al. ("Chiba").

Independent claim 4 has been amended to incorporate features from claims 5, 6 and 7, which is indicated to be allowable on page 7 of the Office Action. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 4 is allowable. Claims 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, and 12 depend on claim 4. Therefore these claims are allowable.

Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form and includes the limitations of independent claim 4. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 10 is now allowable. Claims 14-18 depend on claim 10. Therefore, Applicant submits that these claims are also allowable. Claim 13 depends on allowable claim 4 or 10. Therefore claim 13 also is allowable.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner believes that any of the outstanding issues could be resolved by a telephone conference, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicants believe that no additional fees or extensions are required. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, the Office is conditionally authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. 04-1105. Also, the Office should consider this a conditional petition for the proper extension period needed to have this response entered and considered, if any.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, Applicant requests reconsideration, withdrawal of all rejections, and allowance of all pending claims (i.e., claims 1 – 4 and 9 – 18) in due course.

Dated: August 21, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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